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Brentwood Home Explodes, Officer Shot

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New Hampshire - Police officer Stephen Arkell, 48, was fatally shot when he responded to a call at a home at 46 Mill Pond Road Monday afternoon, and the suspected shooter is also believed to have died in a fiery explosion following the gunfire, authorities said. Attorney General Joseph Foster said Arkell died after arriving at the home around 4 p.m. to investigate a reported domestic disturbance. Foster identified the gunman as Michael Nolan, 47. [Related Photo Galleries](#)

Shooting, explosion in Brentwood

A second officer also arrived as back up and entered the home but was driven out by gunfire, Foster said.

Other officers arrived as the home went up in flames.

Foster said Nolan was believed to have died in an explosion that destroyed the duplex, damaged another home and set off several brush fires. The explosion, which included numerous popping sounds, possibly from ammunition inside, was followed by a four-alarm fire.

Arkell was born and raised in Brentwood. He leaves behind a wife and two daughters at Exeter High School, one of whom is about to graduate and head to college.

He served on the Brentwood force for about 15 years as a part-time officer and animal police officer, Police Chief Wayne Robinson said.

Arkell also worked as a carpenter.

Gov. Maggie Hassan arrived at the scene by later afternoon and offered her condolences to the family and the law enforcement community.

"Tonight, I join all Granite Staters in mourning the loss of Brentwood police Officer Stephen Arkell who died tonight doing his job protecting his community. When an officer is killed in the line of duty it strikes the very fabric of our society and I know all Granite Staters join with me tonight in sorrow for the loss of Officer Arkell. I know that all Granite Staters know that they owe Officer Arkell and his family the deepest gratitude for his service, his sacrifice and his bravery," Hassan said.

Neighbors said Nolan lived at the duplex with his father, Walter, who is in his 80s and is the property owner of the \$250,000 duplex, according to town assessment records. They said the two often had verbal arguments.

Before being evacuated, neighbor Susan Hughes said she saw Walter Nolan being taken from the scene by ambulance. At the time, his son was still believed to be inside the home, she said.

The Arkell family gathered at Exeter High School on Nov. 20, 2013, when Kim Arkell, Stephen's daughter and an Exeter High School senior, signed a National Letter of Intent to play women's lacrosse at the University of Vermont. Kim is a star midfielder for Exeter's girls lacrosse program and also starred for the school's state-championship field hockey team in the fall. Lauren Arkell, a freshman, is also a member of Exeter's varsity lacrosse team.

Arkell coached Kim and a group of her friends from the under-9 age level up into high school, where this spring season he assisted Exeter girls lacrosse coach Courtney Preneta. He also coached within the Exeter Youth Lacrosse program for several years and also led the Cooperative Middle School team in Stratham in Kim's younger years.

The shooting hit close to home for Greenland police officers who still grieve for their chief two years after he was killed. Some Greenland officers, including Chief Tara Laurent, responded to the Brentwood scene.

"It brings you right back to that moment. I was torn between going to where I had to go tonight and going to Brentwood, where I knew there enough people doing what they needed to do. I know how much it means to have an officer help out wherever it was needed. I know that will happen in Brentwood. The thin blue line will come together again," said Greenland police Sgt. Dawn Sawyer.

Sawyer added, "Whatever they need is what we will give. If they want to yell at us, scream and cry, we will be there."

Rockingham County Sheriff Michael Downing called the incident another "sad day for law enforcement. It just shows how dangerous the job is. It could happen at any time, any place, to anybody. It's just very sad for the family and the community and the state ... a loss of somebody that was there to protect," he said.

Neighbor Susan Hughes said she saw one police officer arrive at the home and then heard "rapid gun fire" as soon as the officer entered. It's not known if the officer she saw was Arkell or the second officer.

"We started looking around to see what was going on, we were curious and wondering what was happening," she said. "And then we started seeing all these cops coming."

Her husband, Wayne, said police responded after other neighbors heard an argument coming from the home and called 911. An officer arrived, and Hughes said he heard gunshots a short time later. Hughes said police ordered him to go into his cellar for safety before he was evacuated by police in a Humvee.

The incident brought dozens of police cruisers to the area. The Seacoast Emergency Response SWAT team was sent to the scene with an armored vehicle.

Fire Chief Kevin Lemoine said the explosion that followed the shooting shook the vehicle he was sitting in on the road. Seventy-five firefighters from multiple departments responded and none were injured he said.

Ruth Michel, who lives in the neighborhood, said at about 5 p.m. that she could see smoke in the area and that police officers were running through the neighborhood and the abutting woods.

She said the neighborhood is for residents 55 years old and older and that the president of the Mill Pond Association knocked on residents' doors and warned them to stay inside with their doors locked.

Exeter Hospital spokeswoman Debra Vasapolli confirmed that the hospital was treating one person from the scene in Brentwood.

"This person is not a victim of a gunshot wound," Vasapolli said.

The shooting took place at the Mill Pond Crossings Condominiums, a 55-and-over community, which is advertised as "located on 36 rolling, wooded acres and boasts 47 beautiful detached two-story, two bedroom homes with first-floor master bedroom suites and two-car garages."

Written by Jason Schrieber

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